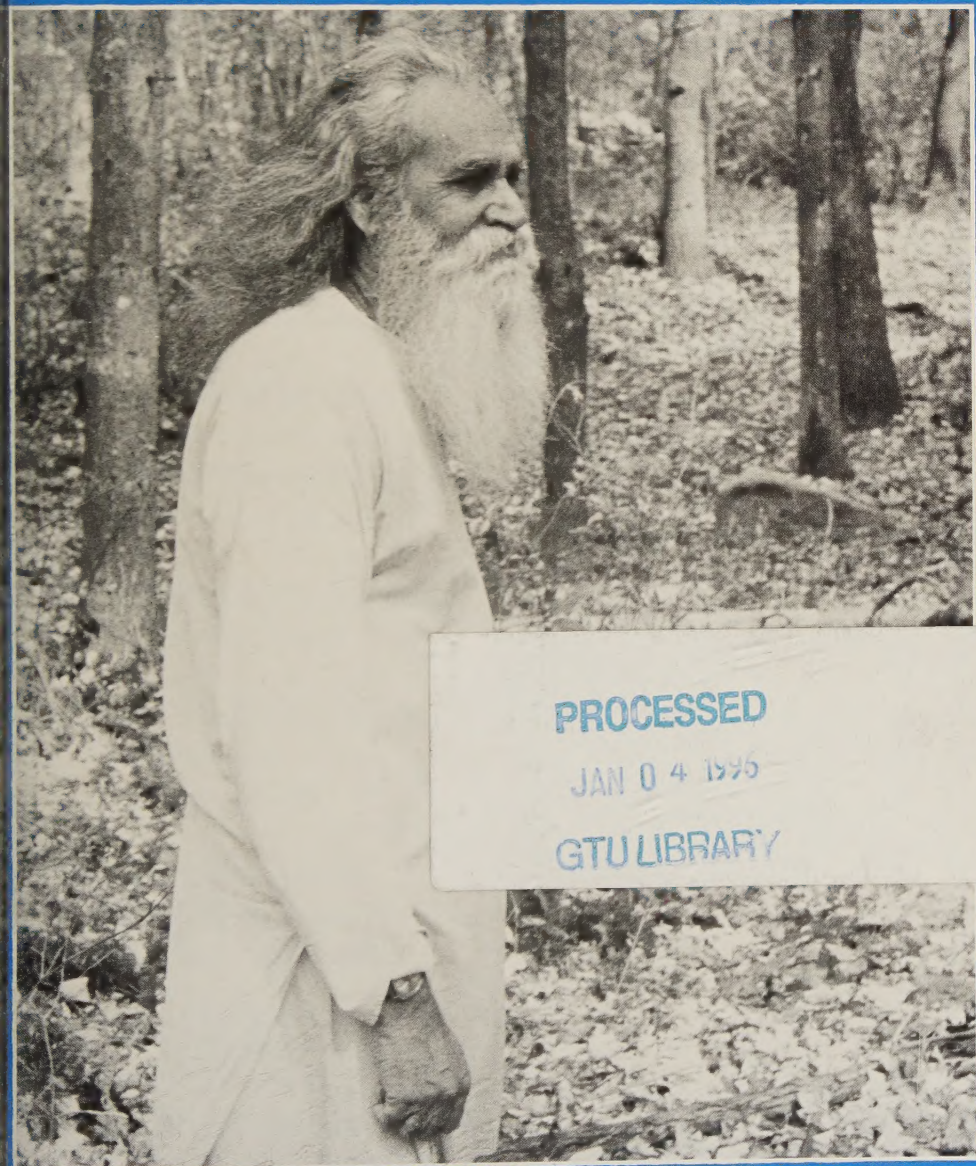


YIntegral[®]Yoga

**THE TEACHINGS OF
SRI SWAMI SATCHIDANANDA**

**Autumn 1995
\$3.75**



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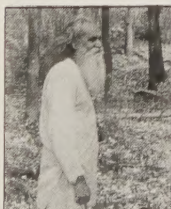
YIntegral Yoga®

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INTEGRAL YOGA® AND YOU

INTEGRAL YOGA® Magazine is the official organ of the Integral Yoga Institutes, Teaching Centers and Satchidananda Ashrams. In these centers the Integral Yoga teachings of Sri Swami Satchidananda are lived and shared. The centers offer ongoing programs in the various branches of Yoga—including Hatha, Raja, Karma, Bhakti and Jnana Yoga - as well as instruction in yogic diet and other related topics. There are open classes, courses, teacher training programs, universal worship services and retreats for both beginners and more advanced students. Resident programs, providing an opportunity to experience total yogic living, are also available.

A wide range of guest programs are offered at the Ashram in Buckingham, Virginia. Located at the Virginia Ashram are: the Audio-Video, Publishing and Distribution departments, the Fine Arts Society, the elementary school, an affiliated Credit Union, and the international coordination offices for all Integral Yoga centers.

The LOTUS (Light Of Truth Universal Shrine), a shrine dedicated to the Light of all faiths and to world peace, is open to the public and is located in Yogaville, Virginia.

For more information, to arrange an Integral Yoga program for any group, or to be put on our mailing list, please feel free to contact any of the centers listed inside the back cover of this Magazine. We are here to serve you.

Letters To

I am enjoying being here at Yogaville very much. This place you have created is a spiritual oasis and health facility for the body and mind.

The Integral Yoga Teacher Training program has given me a starting point from which I can serve God through service to others, as well as maintain my own health and well-being. Thank you for this wonderful gift!

Thank you also for your extraordinary example and for the knowledge that your teachings have given me. I am forever grateful! OM Shanthi.

M. B.

Buckingham, VA

I have been a LYT [Living Yoga Trainee] here for two and one-half months and have enjoyed being here so much. I have learned many things from your teaching and have met some wonderful people here.

Thank you for building such a beautiful community and for making it accessible to everyone.

K. C.

Richmond, VA

I am a disciple of Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, and I go to Maharishi International University.

I have had the privilege of staying at your ashram for one month as a LYT, and during this time, I met true Karma Yogis who taught me by their work how to let go

Sri Gurudev

...y small desires and how to let God do the
...ork. I have seen beautiful souls who are
...anging this world, piece by piece.

I know that this experience at Yogaville
...ill be a "solid ground" in my future growth.
...orking will never be the same for me.
...hen I clean my room now, it is myself
...ho I am cleaning. The joy of work that I
...xperienced at Yogaville will always stay
...ith me.

Thank you for being here for me. Thank
...ou for showing me the human side of a
...alized person. Your presence here and
...our teachings have made a better disciple
...ut of me.

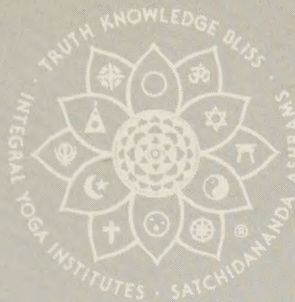
I.
...owa

I have just received a copy of the special
...sue of your journal that was brought out on
...our eightieth birthday. May I offer you my
...heartiest congratulations on this happy oc-
...asion and best wishes for many, many
...ore years of service to humanity. You are
...wonderful man and have won the hearts
...nd minds of many human beings and will,
...am sure, continue to do so.

You will, perhaps, be surprised to
...now that I am a couple of years older than
...ou by birth but I am in good health
...ecause of regular Yoga *asanas*, relax-
...ation, and your blessings.

I look forward to the pleasure of meet-
...g you in the near future. Best wishes.

N. K.
...ew Delhi, INDIA



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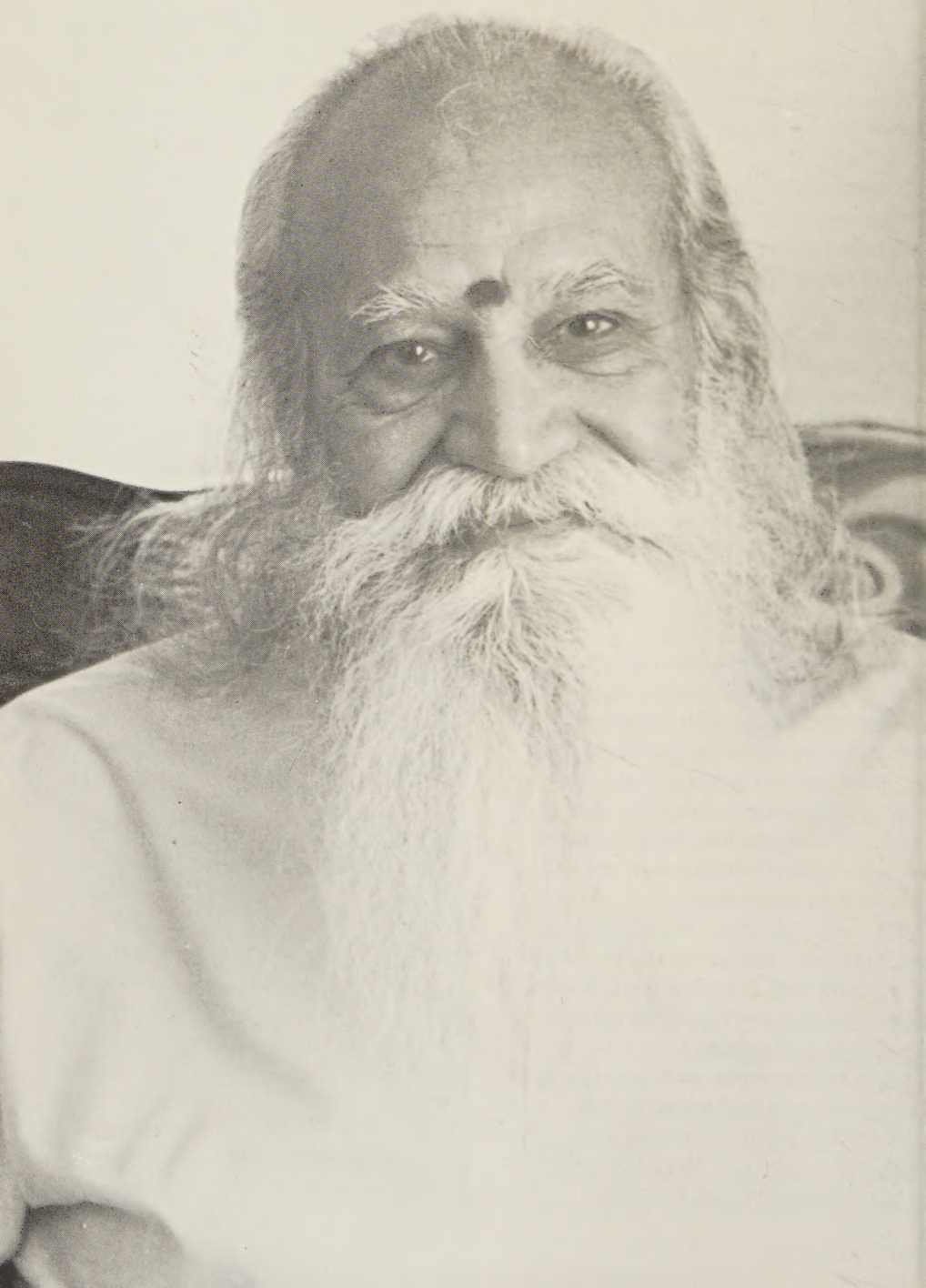
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SRI SWAMI SATCHIDANANDA

(called "Sri Gurudev" by his students)
is a master of Yoga, a world spiritual
teacher, and Guru of the students of
Integral Yoga. Dedicated to the ecu-
menical movement, his motto is: "Truth
is One, Paths are Many." His main
residence is in Buckingham, Virginia.
In response to invitations from all around
the globe, Sri Gurudev travels widely.
Through every possible medium—lec-
tures, conferences, radio, television and
newspaper interviews, books and visits
to centers around the world—he shares
his knowledge in the fields of educa-
tion, religion, health and Yoga.



Satsang

with Sri Gurudev

Question: In the *Bhagavad Gita*, Lord Krishna says, "The yogi who perceives the essential oneness everywhere naturally feels the pleasure or pain of others as his own." Is it possible to feel the pain of others without losing one's peace even if one is not yet enlightened?

Sri Gurudev: Is it possible to feel the pain of others without losing one's own peace? It is possible only when you learn to experience your pain peacefully. It begins with you. If you are going to suffer from your pain, then you will certainly suffer from others' pain, also. However, if you want to maintain your peace, then maintain it when there is suffering in you or in others. This needs a little explanation.

Sometimes, you can easily think, "Oh, if I have to maintain my peace when I see others suffer, then I shouldn't do anything." No; that's not it. You do what is to be done peacefully. I would say even to suffer the pain peacefully. But how is it possible to experience the pain, feel the suffering, and still be peaceful? I would go even further and say not just to be peaceful, but even to be happy.

You can experience the pain, you can suffer from your pain, and you can still be happy. Is it possible? Yes. Ask the woman who goes through labor pains to deliver a baby. It's called *labor pain*. It's suffering, no doubt. But behind the pain, behind the suffering, the pregnant woman is even excited, she's happy: "Hey, I'm going to have a baby!" Likewise, every pain has its

own reward. You are purging out; you are delivering your *karma*. Whatever you conceive, you have to deliver. Don't think that you can conceive and deliver only babies. That's done only by the womenfolk. What about the men?

We all conceive ideas. That's a conception, right? "What's your conception?" we ask. "Have you conceived?" That's why the womb is called *garbasaya*. *Chitta*, or the sum total of the mind, is called *karmasaya*. *Asaya* means bag. *Garbasaya*, the womb, is the bag for the baby. *Chitta* is the bag for the thoughts and for all your actions and reactions. The mind conceives and then cooks up the thoughts, which grow the way the

baby grows inside its mother's womb. Every thought, therefore, is your baby. It grows inside, and one day it gets delivered.

Thus, whatever you conceive, you have to deliver. If you don't deliver, you get more problems. When the delivery time comes, you are happy: "Ah, I am purging out my *karma*. I am getting freed. I am becoming lighter. With a lot of *karma*, with a lot of thoughts, a lot of desires, I am becoming heavier, heavier, heavier. When I purge something out, I become lighter." In a way, that is what is meant by enlightenment. Yes. You feel light; you get Light. Nowadays, I see many people wearing tee shirts that say, "No pain, no gain." If you think of the gain, then you don't suffer from the pain. In fact, sometimes, you may even look for the pain. You may realize, "Yes, I have accumulated many things; I have to purge them out, and without pain I cannot purge." ■

The Wisdom Yoga of Action and Renunciation

by Sri Swami Satchidananda

The following article is an excerpt from The Living Gita by Sri Swami Satchidananda.

In Chapter IV, *sloka* 7, of the *Bhagavad Gita*, Lord Krishna gives the reason for His incarnation:

When righteousness is lost and wickedness prevails, I appear on earth in bodily form.

Sometimes, I'm asked about the coming of the Messiah. The Messiah is the one who brings a message from God. Whenever people forget the true message of God, there is *adharma*, or unrighteousness. Then He comes to remind, transform, and redirect people back to the proper path. If need be, He even destroys their physical bodies and, then, allows them to go through another birth to learn better. It's a form of purgation.

Why should He come into existence in the physical world? The seventh *sloka* gives a promise: whenever there is decay in *dharma* (virtue) and rise of *adharma*, I come, embodied, to be in the midst of people, to move as one with them, to help the needy people, and to help the people who really want to escape from this dilemma. It's a promise given to us by the Lord. The *Bible* says that God sent Jesus as the son of God. Why couldn't God come Himself? Because nobody would recognize Him. God doesn't even have a name. We say God or He. But

**God comes through a form
that we understand and with
whom we can communicate.**

who says that God is He or She or It?

God knows: "If I go as God, either people won't recognize me or they will be afraid of me, because they don't know who I am. I can't just go as me because I am neither human, animal, nor plant. I am formless and nameless. How will they recognize me? So I'll just go to them in ways that they can recognize me." That's why among human beings, He comes as a human being. When He decides to be in the midst of buffalo

certainly He doesn't come as human; He comes as a buffalo. Among pigs, He comes as a mother pig. There are stories of that. We recognize Him

only when He comes as us.

God comes through a form that we understand and with whom we can communicate. When God came to England, He spoke English. When God came to North India, He spoke Sanskrit and Hindi. When He came to Tamil Nadu, He spoke Tamil. That's the promise here: I come to people in their own way so that they can understand me and communicate with me. I come to help them get out of this turmoil, to take them from the unholy to the holy land, from *adharma* to *dharma*, from the unreal to the real. For example, what is Israel? In essence it means that which is *real*. When the children of Israel wanted to escape the unholy land and go to the promised land, God didn't just come and pull them out. First, they had to feel deeply: "Oh, we don't want to be

this wicked place. We want a place where we can practice virtue and truth.”

The minute you feel that you want help and guidance, someone to save you, *then* the savior comes. And nothing can stop Him from saving you—neither land, nor sea. Even the sea will part. All scriptures also have their esoteric meanings, over and above the story itself.

When God wants to help you, nothing can stop Him. That’s the promise that

God gives in this oft-quoted *sloka*. The only thing is, you have to follow Him. Who thinks about God when everything is comfortable and going fine? You have to be really hungry for God to appear like this for you. You have to ask with all your heart. *Then*, it shall be given. Why only then? It’s not because He’s a miser. He waits to see that you’re very hungry. Then, He can really feed you. That’s the secret. If you aren’t hungry, even if I give you delicious food, you won’t enjoy it. You might even throw it back in my face. So, He waits to appear until you’re fit for that and you have the need.

Of course, God is here always. It’s not that He’s coming and going, sometimes here, sometimes away. In one sense, it’s alright to talk this way. But where is God, actually? Everywhere. Where can He go? Where can He come from? But unless you need to feel that presence, you won’t be looking for it.

It’s not that He doesn’t want to come. But only when you thirst for God, will you relish His coming. Then, you will know the value of it.

When God comes to communicate with you, He just plays with you, talks with you, and sometimes even does mischief with you. He doesn’t want you always thinking that

He’s so lofty, because then you put a gap there and lose the benefit. To communicate, He sometimes

comes as your playmate and friend.

Age after age, I take birth to protect the good, destroy the wicked, and establish virtue.

I come “age after age,” He says (*sloka* 8). “This is not the only time. I have come many times, because the world goes through the same cycles constantly. It’s a continuous process. Very often, *adharma* accumulates, and I have to come to clean it away. Then, everything goes on smoothly for a while. Then, slowly, *adharma* accumulates again.”

It’s like cleaning our houses. Just because we clean the house once, that doesn’t mean that we won’t need to do it again. Some do it once a year, others twice a year. It all depends on how many kids run around or how gently we use the house. This world is God’s house, and we are all children running around doing so many things. That’s why he has to keep coming and cleaning up. ■

***Daily bathe the intellect in the Bhagavad Gita—
modern literature seems trivial by comparison.***

—Schopenhauer

***The Bhagavad Gita is a mine of diamonds,
a friend on life’s path to light your way and dignify your labor.***

—Gandhi



Lord Krishna

by Sri Swami Sivananda

The auspicious hour came. The star Rohini was shining. It was *vijaya muhurta* [the hour of victory]. The elements were extremely pleasant. Winds were blowing auspiciously. The stars were shining with luster. The lakes were filled with lotuses. Lord Krishnaincarnated at midnight on this earth. The gods played divine music. The *kinnaras* and *gandharvas* [classes of celestial beings] sang. *Siddhas* [those who possess psychic powers] and *charanas* [a class of astral beings] praised. The *vidyadhara*s [celestial beings] danced along with the *apsaras*es [celestial nymphs], sages and *devas* [celestial beings]. There was a rain of flowers from the heavens in joy.

Vishnu incarnated with lotus eyes, with four hands armed with conch, disc, mace, and lotus, with the mark *srivatsa* [an ornament adorning the body of Lord Vishnu] adorning the chest. Vasudeva saw this marvel of a divine child. Vasudeva praised Him: "Thou art known to me already as the Supreme Being. Thou art an embodiment of knowledge and bliss. Thou art seated in the hearts of all beings. Thou art the witness of the minds of all. Thou art beyond *maya* [the illusory power of Brahman] and *avidya* [ignorance]."

Devaki beheld marks of Vishnu on her son and praised Him: "Thou art beginningless, omnipresent, self-luminous, attributeless, changeless, and actionless. Thou art the source—and place of dissolu-

The purpose of the *Krishna-avatara* was not only to destroy *adharma* [non-righteous conduct], but also to reveal to the world the magnificence of God.

tion—for everything. Kindly do not show me this form with four hands. Let me see You as an ordinary child. Withdraw this

divine, transcendental form. We are afraid of *Kamsa* [a demon who vowed to kill Lord Krishna]. The Lord said: "Let both of you often meditate

with love on Me as a son and as the Supreme Being, and you will obtain eternal bliss and immortality."

The Lord assumed the form of a handsome baby through the power of His own *maya*.

The Purna Avatara

Lord Krishna was the highest incarnation of the great Vishnu. He was the *Purna Avatara* [full incarnation]. He had all the sixteen *kalas*, or rays of the Lord. He was a noble scion of the illustrious Yadava dynasty. He was the world-teacher. He was the one Lord of love. He was the lover of humanity. His enchanting form, with flute in hand, holds the heart of India captive in chains even today.

The object of Sri Krishna's *Avatara* was threefold: to destroy the wicked demons, to take the leading part in the great war fought on the battlefield of Kurukshetra, where He delivered His wonderful message of the *Gita*, and to become the center of a marvelous development of the *bhakti* [devotion] schools of India.

The purpose of the *Krishna-avatara* was not only to destroy *adharma* [non-righteous conduct], but also to reveal to the

world the magnificence of God. Sri Krishna was the symbol of the Absolute, the representation of the mighty Sovereign of the universe. In His well-adjusted, symmetrical conduct of life is portrayed the majestic perfection of God.

Sri Krishna's life is the *Bhagavad Gita* in action. In Him are found the supreme knowledge and the supreme power, blending to form the God-man of all times. In Him the highest *vidya* [knowledge] and *vinaya* [humility] co-exist as inseparable virtues of the Great Hero of the world.

Sri Krishna was a perfect Master. He was a *Karma Yogi*, *Bhakta Yogi*, *Raja Yogi*, and *Jnana Yogi*. He preached *Karma* [action operating through the Law of Cause and Effect], *Upasana* [worship], *Yoga* and *Jnana* [Self-knowledge]. Lord Krishna drove the chariot in the battlefield and danced with the Gopis in the shady retreats of Vrindavana and taught *Yoga* and *Jnana* to Uddhava and Arjuna. The four Yogas are blended in His *Gita*, or the Immortal Song. Lord Krishna was great in knowledge, great in emotion, great in action, all together. The scriptures have not recorded any life more full, more intense, more sublime, more grand than His. The *Bhagavad Gita* contains the teachings of Lord Krishna to Arjuna. It is a wonderful book for constant study. Aspirants study this book with great care daily.

Student days

Sri Krishna received His instructions from Sandipani, a sage of Avantipur. He lived with His teacher like an ordinary student. He was meek, humble, and obedient. He led a laborious life. He gathered fuel from the woods for His preceptor's household. He inspired His classmates with love. Sri Krishna had a wonderful, retentive memory. He mastered the sixty-four arts in sixty-four days.

The Lord's life of selfless action

Krishna was a man of action. he was a history-maker and righter of wrongs. He

stood for justice and righteousness. His policy was to defend the oppressed from the oppressor.

Lord Krishna was the greatest *Karma Yogi* of all time. He held up the torch of wisdom. He was an embodiment of wisdom and selfless action.

He was all love for the cowherd boys, cows, and Gopis [maidens of the land of Briji]. He was the friend and benefactor of the poor and the helpless. He was

extremely kind and merciful toward the meek and the humble.

Krishna was the thunderbolt to the wrestlers assembled in the arena of Kamsa and, yet, He had the softest heart among men. He was Yama [Lord of Death] unto Kamsa, a Cupid unto Gopis, the object of constant meditation for Yogins and devotees, the form of bliss and beatitude to the sages, and a child to his parents. He was Cupid unto Cupid himself.

Lord Krishna was an embodiment of humility, though He was the Lord of the universe. He became the charioteer of Arjuna. He voluntarily accepted the duty of washing the feet of visitors at the time of the *Rajasya Yajna* [an ancient Hindu sacrifice performed by Yudhishtira].

A great statesman

Sri Krishna was a great statesman. The world has not witnessed a greater statesman than Sri Krishna. He was a champion of liberty and a peace-maker. He had wonderful foresight and held extremely liberal views. Even when He was a boy, He taught people the essentials and the true significance of religion when He rose against the popular worship of Indra for getting rain.

He was appointed as a peace-maker to stop the civil war that was to be fought between the Kauravas and the Pandavas. Yudhishtira sent Krishna to negotiate with the Kauravas. Krishna made a long and wise exhortation to Duryodhana. The thrilling and soul-stirring speech delivered by Sri

Krishna before the court of Dhritarashtra proves that He was the greatest statesman. He said to Duryodhana: "O Prince of the Bharata race, make peace with the wise, brave, and righteous Pandavas! Peace alone brings happiness to friends, relations, and the whole world. He who does not act according to the wise instructions of his friends meets with destruction and sorrow." Sri Krishna's political insight and wise statesmanship were admired by the ablest rulers of His time. His wise counsel was sought by kings and rulers.

Lord of the Yogins

You can count even the stars and the particles of sand on the seashore, but it is not possible to count the marvelous and heroic deeds and glorious actions of Sri Krishna.

When He was a child, He performed countless miracles. He showed Visvarupa [vision of the Lord in His cosmic form] to His mother, Yasoda, in His mouth while He yawned. He uprooted the Yamala Arjuna trees. He danced on the Kaliya serpent. He raised the Govardhana Hills on His little finger to protect Gokula from the heavy rains caused by Indra.

He multiplied Himself into various forms when Brahma kept the Gopas [cowherds] and calves away from Krishna's view. He multiplied Himself and appeared in countless forms in the *Rasa-lila* [the divine sport of Krishna]. Can a human being do this? It is only a *Yogesvara* [the Lord of the Yogis] who can perform these great miracles.

Krishna gave eyesight to the blind Vilvamangal. He gave unlimited clothes to Draupadi. He gave cosmic vision to Arjuna.

Who can describe the glory of Lord Krishna, Lord of the Yogins and the Supreme Lord of the three worlds, the Soul of the Universe?

The sage, Narada, wished to find out how Krishna could lead a happy married life with His sixteen thousand wives. Narada

visited their mansions and found Krishna in every one of their homes, engaged in a variety of duties. What a great marvel! Narada was stunned. Does this not prove that Krishna is the Lord of Yogins and is Lord Hari himself?

Krishna is the Lord of all beings. He is, in fact the husband of all women in this world. The real husband is the Lord only. It is to demonstrate this to the world that Lord Krishna incarnated Himself as the son of Devaki and Vasudeva.

Lord Krishna was the greatest *Karma* *Yogi* of all time.

An embodiment of Love and Mercy

Lord Krishna is styled as one who steals butter because He used to eat stealthily the butter in the houses of the Gopis on account of His extreme love for them. This stealing of butter was a sort of sport, or *lila*, to instill delight in the hearts of the Gopis who were His devotees. The Gopis liked this immensely. They were eagerly expecting Krishna to come to eat their butter. Krishna really steals or captivates the hearts of His devotees, makes them forget the world, draws their minds toward His blessed feet, and makes them enjoy everlasting peace and bliss.

Krishna had the *bhava* [feeling or attitude] of mother even for Putana, who came to kill Him, giving her salvation. He gave salvation even to His bitterest enemies, Kamsa and Sisupala, who insulted Him openly in the *Rajasuya Yagna*. Then, what to speak of those who are highly devoted to Him?

The Lord's teachings

Sri Krishna was the friend of Arjuna and Uddhava. His immortal teachings to Arjuna and Uddhava on Yoga, *Bhakti*, and *Jnana* are unique. Even now, they stir the hearts of readers, goading them toward the spiritual path and instilling peace into their hearts.

Arjuna had various kinds of doubts. Lord Krishna cleared his doubts one by one. He pushed Arjuna up on the ladder of Yoga, from one rung to another rung. Ultimately,

Arjuna placed his step in the highest rung of the ladder, attained Knowledge of the Self, and then exclaimed in joy, "O my Lord! My delusion is destroyed. I have attained Knowledge through Thy grace. I am firm now. My doubts have vanished now *in toto*. I will act according to Thy word."

Sri Krishna asked human beings to consider themselves dolls in the hands of God. He also asked people to think of themselves as soldiers, of God as their great general, and of their worldly acts as duties under orders. He asked them to act on the faith and belief that whatever

they did was the work of God. He asked human beings to act, but to act only with devotion to God, without desire for fruits.

The teachings given by Lord Krishna to Uddhava on the eve of His departure from this world are wonderful. He gives instructions on a variety of subjects. But the one ringing note is: "See Me in everything. Surrender yourself to me. Do all actions for My sake. Cut off all sorts of attachments. Have perfect, unswerving devotion to Me. Sing My glories."

Call of the flute

The flute is the symbol of the *pranava* [the monosyllable OM]. It is this flute that attracted the devoted Gopis, the maidens of Vraja, to meet their beloved Lord on the banks of the sacred Yamuna. The sound of this divine flute thrilled the heart with rapturous delight and instilled new life and joy. It produced God-intoxication in all beings and infused life even in insentient objects. The sweetness of the music was unsurpassed. He who heard once the music of Krishna's flute cared not for the nectar of heaven or the bliss of *moksha* [liberation].

The Lord's flute and its music had stirred the souls of the Gopis. They lost all control

over themselves. The world was nothing to them. They felt irresistibly drawn toward Sri Krishna. They had neither shame nor fear in leaving their homes. There was a soul-awakening in them. Their minds were not of this world. Their husbands and brothers stopped them in vain. Who can resist the torrent of divine love for the Lord?

The love that the Gopis bore toward Krishna was a divine love. It was the union of souls. It was no union of sex. It was the aspiration of the *jivatman* to merge in the *Paramatman*. It was the blending of the individual

soul with the Supreme Soul.

The Gopis were the sages of Dandak forest in their previous births. At that time they wished to embrace Lord Rama. They were promised satisfaction in the later *Avatara*. They got blended into the *Paramatman* in the *Krishna-avatara*.

Krishna preached *prem* [love] through His flute. Radha asked Krishna: "O my darling! Why do You love the flute more than me? What virtuous actions has it done so that it can remain in close contact with Your lips? Kindly explain to me, my Lord, the secret of this. I am eager to hear." Sri Krishna said: "This flute is very dear to Me. It has got some wonderful virtues. It has emptied itself of its egoism. It has made its inner hollow quite void, and I can bring out any kind of tune, *raga* [tune, masculine] or *ragini* [tune, feminine], to My pleasure and sweet will. If you also behave toward me in exactly the same manner as this flute, if you remove your egoism completely and make perfect self-surrender, then I shall also love you in the same manner as I love this flute."

This body also is the flute of Lord Krishna in the macrocosm. If you can destroy your egoism and make total self-surrender, unre-

served *atma-nivedana* [devout offering to the Self] to the Lord, He will play on this body-flute nicely and bring out melodious tunes. Your will will become merged in His will. He will work unhampered through your instruments—body, mind, and *indriyas* [senses]. You can rest very peacefully then without cares, worries and anxieties.

O my dear children of Immortality! Lord Krishna is still roaming about in the gullies of Vrindavana. Just as Lord Dattatreya is still moving about with His astral body in the reputed Girnar Hills and gives *darsana* [vision] even now to His sincere *bhaktas*, just as Sri Jnana Dev is still moving about with his astral body in Alandi, near Poona, and gives *darsana*

even now to his sincere devotees, so also is Lord Krishna still moving about in Vrindavana, giving *darsana* to His sincere *bhaktas*. He is waiting with outstretched hands to embrace you with His warm love in His sweet bosom as He did with Mira, Surdas and others in days of yore.

Purify your mind. Destroy your evil *vasanas* [latent subtle impressions] and egoism. Hear once more the flute of the Bansivala {Krishna, the flute-bearer}, Bankibehari [Krishna, wanderer in the woods] of Vrindavana, His immortal song of the *Gita*, and allow Him to play in this body-flute of yours. Lose not this rare opportunity. It is very difficult to get this human body. ■



The Bhagavad Gita: Ancient Teachings for the Modern World

by Dr. Karan Singh

In India there are many ancient scriptures, one of which is the *Mahabharata*. The *Bhagavad Gita* is part of the *Mahabharata* and is looked upon as one of the foundations of *Vedanta*.

According to the great sage, Adi Shankara, even a little knowledge of the *Gita* is enough to save us from the fear of death. And all the great *acharyas*, from ancient times up to the present century, including Sri Aurobindo, Mahatma Gandhi, and our own Sri Gurudev, agree.

But why is the *Gita* so especially important now?

Firstly, the *Gita* is a scripture about conflict. Today, we have much conflict, so we need a scripture that will tell us how to deal with the conflict around us. But the battle isn't a battle for individual aggrandizement or partisan achievement; rather, it is a battle that calls on us to be warriors for the Divine Cause, or Divine Consciousness.

Secondly, in the *Gita* there is the divine personality of the teacher. He who gives us a glimpse of the Divine as the Guru. Every Indian scripture has a Guru. But in the *Gita*, the Guru is no less than Sri Krishna, himself, who is looked upon as an incarnation of the Divine, that which, shining, causes everything else to shine. And, most importantly in the *Gita*, Lord Krishna comes as a friend, a guide, and a charioteer to Arjuna. Thus, the teaching in the *Gita*

comes directly from the mouth of Lord Krishna, an incarnation of the Divine.

Thirdly, we have in the *Gita* the unique relationship between the Guru and the disciple. This relationship is usually affectionate and loving, but uniquely in the *Gita*, it is

also like the relationship of father to son, as well as the relationship between friends (which cuts across boundaries) and the relationship of the lover and be-

loved—all three of these types of relationships are combined in the relationship between Lord Krishna and Arjuna. Therefore, the *Bhagavad Gita* is the most profound of any of the world scriptures.

Fourthly, there is the universal applicability of the teachings embodied in the *Gita*. The *Gita* contains a universal message, a message that is not directed to one caste, one creed, one group. Lord Krishna says that whatever faith one follows, if it is true, He will give you direct knowledge: Truth is One, Paths are Many.

As Sri Gurudev points out in the *Living Gita*, there are four main teachings in the *Bhagavad Gita*. The *Gita* teaches:

1. an integrated, *integral* Yoga, integrating *Jnana* (the intellectual, philosophical approach), *Bhakti* (the devotional approach), *Karma* (the way of good works dedicated to the Divine), and *Raja* (spiritual practices such as meditation and

breathing techniques). Each one of us has to integrate these four approaches in order to develop fully our personalities.

2. the theory of correction action. The *Gita* teaches that by worshipping through our work as an offering to the Divine, we will automatically know what actions should be performed and what actions should not be performed, according to our inner voice.

3. repeated reassurances of divine intervention. Sri Aurobindo commented that divine intervention does not occur automatically; rather, human beings play a divine role in the working out of destiny. If you have faith, courage, and aspiration and you call, then the response will come. Human beings must open themselves to the power of the Divine.

4. the gospel of total surrender. At the

end of the *Gita*, Lord Krishna says, "Leave all *dharma*s;" that is, give up all those false supports—come to Me, and I will save you.

These four teachings taken together can give us a full life philosophy. It's a difficult

path—sharp as a razor's edge—but there is no turning back for the human mind now; otherwise, we'll be swept down by the inertia

There is no turning back for the human mind now.

of the past. Individually and collectively, we must open ourselves to the Divine and then divine intervention will be at hand.

Finally, the act of dying, itself, does not presuppose any particular spiritual experience, but if you can die with the knowledge of the divine experience, then that act becomes a spiritual experience. So don't wait until death. Now is the time to open yourself to the Divine! ■



Thank You, My Krishna

by Vasudevan Rasiah

Hindus have a deity of choice (*ishta deva*) and a family deity (*kula deva*). On the maternal side of our family, Lord Krishna is both the *ishta deva* and the *kula deva*. During our childhood, our mother often read us stories from a holy book called the *Maha Bhaktha Vijayam*, which contained stories of Lord Krishna's devotees.

During the 1960s, we lived in a village in Kandy, SRILANKA. When I was a child, this village had neither power, nor town water. The approach to our house was almost a mile long, and it was very dark and lonely at night. We were scared to walk alone after dark. Thus, it was not surprising that one of the stories from the *Maha Bhaktha Vijayam* that captured my heart was the tale of "Little Ramu."

Ramu lived in a remote village with his grandmother. The two were very devoted to Lord Krishna. Although they were very poor, Ramu's grandmother had arranged for him to attend the nearby *gurukulam* (school). The way to the school was through a thick, lonely jungle. Ramu begged his grandmother not to send him to school; in fact, he even suggested that he stay at home to help her with the housework instead of going to school.

Questioning her grandson, Ramu's grandmother discovered that Ramu was terrified of walking alone through the dense jungle. She drew Ramu into her arms, telling him, very kindly, not to be afraid, and she imparted to him a family secret. She told Ramu not to be afraid because he had a very loving brother who lived in the jungle and

who would look after him. She also told Ramu that if he ever needed his brother, he would only have to call out his brother's name and his brother would appear.

Ramu was very excited and asked the name of his brother and how he could recognize him. Grandma replied that his brother answered to the name of "Krishna" and that he always carried a flute, which he played very well.

The next day, Ramu left for school. While crossing the jungle, he heard many noises and was suddenly afraid. He stopped, looked around, and called out to his brother, "Krishna, Krishna." But there was no response. He then cried louder, "Krishna, Krishna, please come, Krishna; I'm scared and lonely." Still, there was no response. Again, Ramu cried out, with eyes full of tears, "Krishna, please come to me, Krishna. I have nobody except you." Suddenly, Ramu

Ramu heard the sound of a flute being played. The sound was so beautiful that he was overwhelmed with joy.

heard the sound of a flute being played. The sound was so beautiful that he was overwhelmed with joy. Krishna came running from the jungle, and Ramu and Krishna hugged each other, exchanged greetings, and

played in the jungle until school time. From that time forward, these meetings took place every time Ramu crossed the jungle.

One day, the *guru* (teacher) of the school requested that each student bring a gift to the school fair, which was to be held the next day. Ramu conveyed this request to his grandmother, who became very sad, as she didn't have anything to send to school. A very unhappy Ramu left for school the next

morning with empty hands. As usual, Krishna met Ramu in the jungle, and he asked Ramu the reason for his sadness. When the reason was given, Krishna smiled, wiped the tears from Ramu's eyes, and told him not to be sad, that he would give him a pot of butter to take to school! Ramu took the pot of butter and continued on his way.

At school, Ramu's classmates, all from rich families, had many large gifts, and they all laughed at his gift of the butter. They teased him, saying that the pot of butter would not be enough for even a tenth of the guests.

Finally, the time came for lunch. The teacher noticed that there was no butter, except for the butter in Ramu's pot. He was very upset because there was not enough butter for all the

guests. Nevertheless, he began serving the butter. Suddenly, he became alarmed and excited at the same time, for as soon as he emptied the pot of butter, it refilled itself.

Even after serving all the guests, the pot was still full. The mystified teacher and the guests called Ramu and asked where he got the pot. When Ramu told them about how he got the pot from Krishna, nobody believed him. In fact, the teacher remarked that he didn't know Ramu to have any brothers, and he admonished Ramu not to tell a lie but to tell the truth. When Ramu maintained that he had told the truth, the teacher and the guests insisted that Ramu take them to meet his brother, Krishna.

Once they reached the jungle, Ramu called out, "Krishna, Krishna." There was no response. He called out again, "Krishna, Krishna." And, again, there was no response. Angered, the teacher and the guests shouted at Ramu, telling him to stop the joking and to tell the truth, *for there was no Krishna*. Ramu cried out again and again, tears running down his cheeks: "Krishna, please come to me. Krishna, no one be-

lieves me. They are accusing me of lying. Please, Krishna, show yourself."

Just then, they all heard the sound of the flute! And the sound kept coming nearer and nearer. Suddenly, Ramu jumped up, crying: "Oh Krishna, you have come; you have come." Ramu ran and hugged Krishna. In the meantime, the teacher and the guests all heard the flute and the voices, but they could not see Krishna. When they questioned this phenomenon, a heavenly voice told them that they could not see Krishna because they didn't believe in him.

Immediately, the teacher and the guests realized Ramu's devotion to Krishna. They respected and praised Ramu.

After hearing this story, I asked my mother in what form Krishna would come when I called to Him. Mother said that she didn't know in what form He would come but that, without fail, He *would* come. To explain further, she

told me the following story.

Shankar was very devoted to and had many visions of Lord Krishna. As time went by, Shankar became proud that the Lord was dearer to him than to the other villagers. In fact, Shankar wanted to prove this to the others.

One day, Shankar invited Lord Krishna to come to his house for lunch. Lord Krishna smiled, accepted the invitation, and said that He would come the next day at noon. Shankar was so happy and so proud that he invited the whole village for lunch the next day. At eleven o'clock in the morning, the entire village gathered outside Shankar's house to welcome Lord Krishna. Meanwhile, in a nearby field, a herd of buffalo was grazing. At noon, one of the buffalos made his way toward Shankar's house. Shankar did not want a dirty buffalo standing in front of his house when Lord Krishna arrived, so he sent his servants to chase the buffalo away. But

A heavenly voice told them that they could not see Krishna because they didn't believe in him.

the buffalo kept coming toward the house. Shankar, himself, took a stick, beat the buffalo, and chased it away.

Time edged on past noon, but there was no sign of Lord Krishna. The villagers laughed. They made fun of Shankar and, then, left his house.

Shankar was very hurt and very sad. He ran to the prayer room and prayed to Lord Krishna with deep devotion. Suddenly, Lord Krishna appeared. Shankar was both happy and hurt at the same time. He asked the Lord why He had not come for lunch as He had promised. The Lord smiled and said, "I came for your lunch, but you and your servants did not allow me in the house." While Shankar looked at Lord Krishna with a shocked expression, Krishna, smiling, turned sideways and showed marks on his body that had been made by a stick.

He held Lord Krishna's feet, asking for forgiveness and realizing humility.

Shankar realized at that point that the buffalo had been none other than Lord Krishna, himself. He held Lord Krishna's feet, asking for forgiveness and realizing humility.

My mother told us that Lord Krishna would never abandon us when we call to

Him with true devotion and that He would come to us in any one of His forms.

I believe in Lord Krishna with all my heart. I have

called on Him many a time; he always comes to my aid. I have shared my happiness and my sadness with him. And it took me a long time to realize and to understand one of the divine forms in which he was always with me. Today, I would like to share this secret with you: He is none other than my beloved Swamiji. Thank you for being my Krishna, Swamiji. ■

The blessed Lord said: It is certainly hard to see me as you have. Even the devas long to see my cosmic form

[Though these produce much merit] the study of sacred scriptures, practice of austerities, gifts of charity, and even self-sacrifice will not earn anyone the vision that you have seen.

Only by constant and steady devotion can I be seen in my true cosmic form, and known, Arjuna, and realized.

Whoever desires me above everything else, and (thus) completely devotes himself to me, and (thus) offers me all his actions, and (thus) sheds all personal (selfish) attachments and feelings of ill-will toward any other creature – Arjuna, that person surely enters into me.

—The Living Gita, ch.11, v.52-55

The Story of the Family in the Forest

by Padman Bernstein

Once upon a time, there was a family. They were very close. Often, the children (a brother and sister who loved each other as much as any brother and sister could) would wander off to play in a forest near their home. Their parents told them that it was okay to play in the forest but that they should always stay close to home. Sometimes, the children didn't listen, and they wandered far from home. Somehow, though, they always found their way back—well, except once.

Of course, without that one time, there would be no story!

As you have probably already guessed, one day the children wandered too far from home, and it wasn't too long before they realized that they were lost. They tried and tried, but they could not find their way home. They became frightened. After a time, these two loving children even became angry at each other. And they started to shout and blame each other for their dilemma.

After some time, it began to get dark. The children became very frightened; consequently, they couldn't think in a balanced way. They ran off in one direction, then another. At one time, they became so scared that they each ran off alone, losing one another. So, for awhile, brother and sister were not only separated from Mom and Dad, but they were also separated from each other.

Eventually, the two grew tired and sat

down. Suddenly, they started hugging each other, and they began to cry. Can you picture that?

Finally, they stopped crying and just sat quietly. They were even too tired to think. It was at that point, dear reader, that the children heard a sound! It was the sound of their parents calling them! Mom and Dad called each child's name, one at a time, repeating the names again and again. "Shanthi," Mom called her daughter. "Om," Dad called his son. And they kept calling their children, over and over again, just as though they were repeating a *mantra*: Om Shanthi, Om Shanthi, Om Shanthi.

Mom and Dad told the children later that they had been calling all the time, but the children had been so scared of being lost or cut off from their parents (though they didn't know this) that they didn't stop long enough to think calmly and

quietly about their dilemma. Thus, they had not heard their parents calling to them.

When the children finally did hear their parents' voices, they went running out of the forest toward the *mantra*-like sound. They were so happy! They found their parents waiting near home, happy to see them.

From that day on, Mom and Dad made this getting lost and being found into a game. Sometimes, the children would go into the forest and spin around and around. Then, they would become very still, waiting si-

**And they kept calling
their children, over
and over again, just
as though they were
repeating a *mantra*:
Om Shanthi, Om
Shanthi, Om Shanthi.**

lently for the sound of their parents calling to them. Somehow, the parents always seemed to be calling their children; and no matter when or where the children got lost, they could hear their Mom and Dad. As soon as they became quiet long enough to listen for the sound, the children would run toward it and toward

their home. Then, to make the game even more fun, the parents would hide in the forest! And, they would wear different costumes to disguise themselves, just as we do on Halloween. They would disguise themselves as animals or birds, or as a tree or a cloud or even as another person. Some of the disguises were pretty scary. But the children weren't super afraid because they knew the secret: hiding in the disguises were their mother and father. In fact, the more the children came to understand this, the less afraid they were.

Also, Mom and Dad were clever as to their hiding-places, so the children had to work to their capacity to find them. But Mom and Dad always let the children find them. Soon, the parents learned that the more effort the children put into seeking them, the happier the children were when they finally found them. However, because they loved their children so much, the parents never made the game too difficult or too easy. As soon as the children realized this, they relaxed more and had a good time. It no longer mattered to them how long it took to find Mom and Dad, only that they would find them. And they always did.

• • •

This story of the children in the forest symbolizes a certain type of attitude or approach to life. It is expressed with childlike innocence by a ten-year-old girl named Mary,

who appears in Robert Coles's book, *The Spiritual Life of Children*.

In the book, Mary is quoted as saying: "When you're put here, it's for a reason. The Lord wants you to do something. If you don't know what, then you've got to try hard to find out what. It may take time. You may

make mistakes. but if you pray, He'll lead you to your direction. He won't hand you a piece of paper with a map on it. No, sir. He'll whisper

something, and at first you may not even hear, but if you have trust in Him and you keep turning to Him, it will be alright."

Just as children are, in some way, always children to their parents, we are always children to that Higher Power, or God, and we should try to hear the voice of God, our loving Mother and Father. Significantly as Mary said, we don't get a "map," or complete directions. We get "whispers," or hints and clues. Then, we have to figure them out and "try hard." God will not do it for us. We must do it for ourselves.

But how do we hear the voice of God calling? Is there a best way? One way? No. We must find our own way. This is our most special gift from God, that we choose how we find Him/Her. Why? Because in finding God, we find ourselves. In this regard, Sufi Master Hazrat Inayat Khan wrote "It is not by self-realization that we realize God; it is by God-realization that one realizes self."

And we can't just do it with willpower. We can't just say, I *will* listen. Rather, we can begin by cultivating the desire to listen. With the desire to listen, we will begin to look around the forest, our inner and outer worlds, for "whispers." We will begin to do such things as regularly read spiritual books, pray, meditate, practice Yoga, associate with like-minded people, visit peaceful places, eat healthy food, and live in such a

way that we feel will help us toward the sound of that inner voice.

One way to accomplish the latter is by repeating a *mantra*, a name for God—as the parents in the story did—repeating it again and again, for all the days of our lives, in meditation or when walking or at any time. In this subtle way, we activate the calling voice of God that is alive within our hearts. And we are simply listening, aware of the voice of God, rather than asking for or praying for something. Thus, by not asking for anything, we surrender to the voice and to the direction from within.

In this way, God as *Mantra* “whispers” his children home. The *mantra* creates its own space in our minds, developing in us the habit of “listening and watching awareness.” The more we meditate, the more this space or habit or witness or characteristic grows; it becomes part of us and guides—or Gods—us in our lives.

But, no matter which spiritual path we take to hear God—the voice of a *mantra*, organized or non-traditional religion, a clean diet, a yogic lifestyle, attendance (or non-attendance) at a church, synagogue or temple, the guidance of a *guru*, dream analysis, devotional prayer, or a combination of all of the above, the most important element is the desire to find God. Jesus said, “I am the voice

of one crying in the wilderness.” Let us go like small children to parents who love us dearly. Let us go into the wilderness, or forest of our hearts and desire to hear that crying voice. And let us seek to know why it cries.

Just as their parents called the children, God is always calling us. God knows where we are. It is we who need to find God.

Where do we look? The answer is given by Jesus in this quote from the *Course in Miracles*: “When I said I am with you always, I meant it literally. I am not absent to anyone in any situation. Because I am always with you, *you* are the way, the truth and the light.”

With this teaching in mind, dear reader, no matter what disappointment, what problem, or what satisfaction comes our way, let us resolve right now to try, little by little, to learn how to surrender ourselves more and more to our true nature. Or, as little Mary said in *The Spiritual Life of Children*, “. . . if you have trust in Him and you keep turning to Him, it will be alright.” With this approach to life, God will surely help us to hear the whispers.

May God bless us with patience and ever-growing faith so that, with God’s grace, each of us may glimpse that unknowable mystery, that mystery that we call God—and, all in God’s good time. OM Shanthi. ■

How rich are the depths of God — how deep his wisdom and knowledge — and how impossible to penetrate his motives or understand his methods! Who could ever know the mind of the Lord? Who could ever be his counselor? Who could ever give him anything or lend him anything? All that exists comes from him; all is by him and for him. To him be glory forever. Amen.

—St. Paul



It's Really Very Simple

It's really very simple.

The basic laws are few.

All we need to do is become them:

God is love. Become that fully.

God is peace. Follow that only.

God is action. Be busy doing good.

God is truth. Search for that always.

They are our Bhakti, Raja, Karma and Jnana Yogas.

And we should live them all at once.

Jai Gurudev!

—Sumati Lobdell

Inaction In Action and Action In Inaction

by Dr. O. R. Krishnaswami

The *Bhagavad Gita* (Song Celestial), a dialogue between Lord Krishna, an incarnation of God, and Arjuna, a warrior king, forms part of the great Indian epic, the *Mahabharata*. In the *Gita*, Lord Krishna discloses external spiritual truths and the rare secrets of Yoga and *Vedanta*, a non-dualistic philosophy expounded thousands of years ago, in the pre-historic period, by ancient seers and sages in India.

In the eighteenth *sloka* of Chapter five of the *Bhagavad Gita*, Lord Krishna says: "He who seeth inaction in action and action in inaction is wise among men; he is a yogi and performer of all actions" ["men" includes "women"].

One may wonder how there can be "inaction in action and action in inaction." This statement looks like a puzzle, appearing to be a total contradiction. Lord Krishna, Himself, confirms the puzzling nature of these words when He says, "Even scholars are confused about what is action and what is inaction" (Chapter 4, *sloka* 16). Perhaps an understanding of Lord Krishna's vision may help us to understand these words.

Ordinarily, we understand action as "doing" or "performing" a work and inaction as "non-performance" or "absence of activity." Inaction, or actionlessness, is not a mere absence of action. "One does not achieve actionlessness," says Lord Krishna, "by non-performance of action, nor does one attain *siddhi* [powers] or freedom from

action by mere renunciation of action" (Chapter 3, *sloka* 4).

Action and Renunciation

Normally, we think that we perform actions; we take ourselves to be the doers and enjoyers of the fruits of actions. We also think that we can remain doing nothing. But are we really the doers? In the vision of *Vedanta* and the

Bhagavad Gita, we are not the doers or actors. Why do we, then, think that we do or act? Because of our ignorance. It is due to our ignorance that we wrongly identify ourselves with our body and mind. We are not the body, nor the mind. We are eternal Self or *Atma* or Pure Consciousness or Awareness. The Self does not act. It is a silent witness, or observer, only. In its presence, the body, the sense organs, and the mind perform their respective functions.

A wise person who possesses the knowledge of Self knows that only his body acts and, as Awareness or Consciousness, he does not act. He perceives inaction, or actionlessness even when engaged in activities. He identifies himself with the Actionless Self.

The wrong notion of an ignorant person who identifies him- or herself with the body and mind is similar to that of a person sitting in a moving train. The trees and buildings outside the track appear to be moving; but, in fact, they are immovables. Only the train is moving. In the same way, I, as actionless Awareness or Consciousness, am sitting in the body. When the body and its organs act,

it looks as though this Awareness is acting.

In this regard, a wise person relinquishes the notion of his doership and the rewards of actions as well. This is the true meaning of renunciation (Chapters 5, 18; *slokas* 18, 11). It does not mean performance. In fact, none can ever remain for even a moment without performing action. Even breathing is an action.

We may find it difficult to comprehend the above knowledge of Self because of the impurities of our mind: desires, likes and dislikes. Just as an unclean mirror cannot reflect a correct image, so also an impure mind cannot understand our real nature. How, then, can we purify our mind? The Lord exhorts us to purify our mind through *Karma Yoga*, or the Yoga of action.

Karma Yoga

What is *Karma Yoga*? It means performing actions without the desire for their fruits, balanced in success and failure, gain and loss, etc. Evenness, or equanimity of mind is *Yoga*. Lord Krishna says: "You have choice over your action, but never with its fruit. Let not the fruit of action be thy motive, nor the attachment be to inaction" (Chapter 2, *sloka* 47). The fruit of your action is the forbidden fruit spoken of in the Bible.

If you find it difficult initially to give up the desire for the fruits of your action, then Lord Krishna advises you to "perform action for God's sake, with devotion, holding Him as the final goal" (Chapter 11, *sloka* 55). When you perform actions as offerings unto the Lord, you will attain purity of mind and, finally, Self-realization (Chapters 3, 12; *slokas* 19, 11). At the same time, you would perform the actions with devotion and utmost sincerity, as you are offering them unto the Lord. Then, work, itself, becomes worship.

However, if you are unable to perform actions for God's sake, Krishna prescribes

another approach: do your work for your satisfaction but dedicate the result to God.

What does "performing action for God's sake or dedicating its fruit to Him" mean? It means service to God. But is God so helpless as to need our services? Not at all. Then what else does this teaching imply? It implies selfless service to other beings, because God, as Supreme Self, resides in all beings. Just as both the ocean and the waves are the same water, so are the Lord and all beings the same Self. The Self is indivisible, like ether. The Self is the same in all bodies. It is the same Consciousness in all bodies (Chapter 18, *sloka* 20). When you acquire the knowledge of Self, you shall see all beings in your Self and also in God (Chapters 4, 6; *slokas* 35, 29).

Inaction in Action

According to the teachings in the *Bhagavad Gita*, He who performs actions without egoism and attachment to their fruits really does nothing at all though he is ever engaged in activity, for he has realized his

identity with the eternal, actionless Self. His self-less action is dissolved (Chapter 4, *sloka* 23). He is truly called a person of renunciation, a yogi

**When you perform actions
as offerings unto the Lord,
you will attain purity of mind
and, finally, Self-realization.**

(Chapter 18, *sloka* 11). As the lotus leaf is not tainted by water, the person of renunciation is not tainted by actions (Chapter 5, *sloka* 10). Just as burnt seeds cannot germinate, so also the actions burnt by the fire of Self-knowledge cannot produce a future birth.

Finally, the yogi understands the secret of *karma*, or action. He perceives actions from the state of inaction, at the same time enjoying inaction in the midst of actions. Thus, he sees inaction in action. To him all actions are equally welcome. He neither hates an unpleasant work, nor prefers a pleasant one (Chapter 18, *sloka* 10). He is free from cares, worries, anxieties and fears. His mind is quite calm, and he enjoys Supreme Peace (Chapter 5, *sloka* 13). ■

Sri Krishna and the Gita

by Sadhu Vaswani

The Janmashtami Day [August 26, the birthday of Sri Krishna] is the greatest day in Hindu history. The day bore witness to a world event. Sri Krishna is a world figure, not merely a "national" or "Hindu" hero. Sri Krishna is the Beloved of India.

We read of Krishna in the *Mahabharata*, the *Harivansa* and the *Puranas*. Through these fifty centuries and more, the historicity of Krishna has clung to the race-memory of Hindustan. Sri Krishna appeared at a cyclic moment. He opened a new age. And centuries have but added to, not taken away from, the marvel of his life and the beauty of his message. The Krishna of history has become the Vasudeva of faith. Sri Krishna is an immortal

of history. The Blessed Name has gone into many scriptures and many songs, and the fragrance of his wisdom fills the *Mahabharata* and the *Puranas*, the *Vaishnava* literature and the poetry of Surdas.

His message, the wisdom of the *Bhagavad Gita*, was given on the Indian soil but not for India alone. Sri Krishna is for all—all races, all religions. The *Gita* is a scripture of humanity.

In the *Gita*, Sri Krishna says to Arjuna: "Awake! Arise! And act! Seek thou not repose, O Arjuna! But stand up and act! For the world is one of toil and pain. Wander not amid the vanities of the world. But come unto Me! cling to Me! Take refuge in Me! Be not, through desire, a disciple of the world! But be thou My child! Strip thyself of self! Then dive within and bring up from the depths, the Pearl of

great price, the Soul enveloped, alas, by many veils."

In these few, simple words is the heart of the message of the Lord. To Arjuna, despondent and struggling for the Light, the Master gave the message that still speaks its word of strength, in the intellectual climate of today, to many in many lands: "Give up, not the world, but worldliness!"

The *Gita's* message is one of life. Live in the world, not for the lower self of passion, pride and power, not for the ego, but for the *Atman*. Work as an instrument of the Will Divine. Be in the world to build the "Kingdom of God." Krishna himself, did not retire to a jungle when the conflict between the Kauravas and

Pandavas was keen. He was as a humble servant in Arjuna's chariot in the very midst of the two armies.

Sri Krishna said in a talk during an assembly: "The name most dear to me is Deena-bandhu, friend of the poor, servant of the suffering ones." The Yoga of the *Gita* asks us to respect the poor and give to all who suffer the service of love!

We live in *kali-yuga*, an age of re-barbarization and belief in brute force, an age of wars and violence, an age of materialism and darkness. But every winter changeth to spring. And there is a dream in mine eyes that a new *satya-yuga* is coming! And they are the true devotees of the Lord who work for the new *satya-yuga*, holding high the Flag of the *Gita* and giving to humanity and bird and beast the service of love! ■

Yoga and Health

BIRTH PREPARATIONS AND THE IMPACT OF THE DELIVERY METHOD ON THE MOTHER-CHILD RELATIONSHIP

by Béatrice Baby



A baby delivered into the loving arms of Sri Gurudev

Béatrice Baby is a midwife at Beauvair Hospital, FRANCE. This article originally appeared in IYI, a journal published by the Integral Yoga Institute of Paris, and has been translated courtesy of the Institute.

The crucial relationship between mother and child

In our daily practice as midwives, we often get the impression that the more relaxed women are and the better they master a breathing technique, the easier their deliveries. For some women, this behavior is spontaneous; for others, it is a result of a practice taught during child-delivery training sessions. On the other hand, some women give way to panic,

allowing the event to overwhelm them—those women who attended a special course but who claimed that it was useless and the ones who did not attend any courses, sometimes regretting it.

As a professional midwife, I think it essential to reflect upon the contents of such a child-delivery training course, upon its practical impact during the delivery itself and especially upon the mental improvement that it can actually bring to the women whom we serve. And, undoubtedly, the most important issue is the way in which a woman *lives* her pregnancy and delivery and how this way impacts on the mother-child relationship.

Such reflections lead us to the following

questions:

1. What motivates the women who attend training courses?
2. How does the woman experience her pregnancy? How does the couple experience it?
3. How do both the woman and her husband experience the delivery?
4. What is the relationship between the mother and her child?

Upon reflection, we come to realize that in our Western world, we have lost intimacy with the body, an intimacy that enables us to experience as simply as possible such a natural event as giving birth to a child. Moreover, the excessive medication that pervades pregnancy and delivery these days hardly leaves any room for spontaneity. The pregnancy, the delivery, and the welcoming of the child are all to be prepared for by the couple, along with the medical team as well. For example, selecting the delivery place is decisive not only for the safety of the child and mother, but also for the welcoming and understanding attitude of the medical team with regard to such an exceptional moment.

Yes, going to the hospital means safety, medical care and even total reliance on an almighty medical corps, but it also means breaking away from the family circle, which is sometimes quite difficult for women. Therefore, it is important to enable a woman to prepare for the birth of her child. This is the primary role of the midwife.

Within the course of a life, the symbiotic state will determine the crucial relationship between mother and child. Such a relationship establishes itself as soon as pregnancy begins. Such a period should be most looked after by the mother: she should allow her intuition to work, guided as it may be by the unknown. Unfortunately, excessive medication connected with birthing has, to a great extent, curbed the subtle, natural, dynamic forces. Pregnancy

is no longer a simple act. Births are planned. Women repeatedly seek medical advice. They resort to scanning to see the unborn child. And so on. Thus, one should become aware, even before conceiving a baby, that experiencing pregnancy and delivery "differently" often means breaking away from society itself, a difficult task requiring great determination on the couple's part. Yet, thanks to such a decision, instinct will be able to express itself and birth will recover its natural state.

Should we, then, refuse to deliver our babies in the hospital? In some countries, women have chosen to deliver at home; in France, certain trends like "*Nature à la maison*" (Home-birthing) have been developed and offer such an opportunity to couples. But what about all the other women who prefer the safe environment of a hospital without any affective loss? What can we offer them? As a professional midwife, I have chosen to do my best to make such a situation possible.

Yoga and motherhood

For many years now I have chosen Yoga as a way to improve, fundamentally, my well-being.

Choosing Yoga implies not only a "technical" approach to postures (*asanas*) and breathing (*pranayama*), but also, and above all, a different state of mind during the performance of the slightest acts of our everyday life. I would like to emphasize that, personally, my acquaintance with the world of Yoga had essentially been one of tolerance and sympathy. So, it was quite natural that I practiced Yoga during my pregnancies and deliveries. The experience was so conclusive that it gave birth—without pain—to a wish: to become a midwife. Wishing to share my happiness, I focused all my attention to adapting the mastery of body and mind in preparation for birth within the hospital environment.

However, it is important to remember that Yoga is not a technique, but rather a

state of mind, a way of living, of apprehending the world around us and of situating ourselves positively in that world. Its objective is to strike a balance between the body, the mind and the spirit of the individual. Practicing *asanas* (standing postures to stretch the back and to free the diaphragm and squatting postures to prepare the perineal and pelvic areas)—motionlessness in the posture—and concentration on breathing necessarily lead to a relaxed state. Relaxation brings about a closer relationship with the body, establishing a new attitude toward pain—from negative to positive—making it possible to endure pain relaxedly.

In the course of such preparation, one would place particular stress on breath control, considered to be the main pain-relieving instrument for uterine contractions, and muscle relaxation, which, in fact, requires great concentration. Concentrating on the posture, abandoning herself totally to pain, will enable the woman to bear her contractions, making her delivery a creative act.

In this regard, I advise women to work on breathing, relaxing, concentrating on the present. Correct breathing depends mainly on the way air is breathed out, as slowly and as deeply as possible, coupled, if need be,

with a whine or even a cry. Besides working on postures and breathing adapted to each particular stage of the delivery, we also use the voice to find the correct breathing.

The entire course consists of eight two-hour lessons, with one hour devoted to questions and answers on all topics related to childbirth: delivery and its consequences, care of the newborn, breast-feeding, the return home, and the changes within the couple and the family. The second hour is devoted to Hatha Yoga practice.

I have seen proof that Yoga can truly help women experience good deliveries, provided the practices are done accurately. Also, I am sometimes lucky enough to assist in childbirth the women whom I have personally prepared, which enables us to put directly into use all that we practiced together. On the whole, the experience is quite positive; however, there is sometimes a side-effect: the woman may feel guilty because she does not feel up to what she has been taught.

Perhaps, I may be too idealistic when I tell women that they can do anything, but I truly believe that they are really great! And even if hospital facilities impose limits on us, we can find adaptations that will serve to respect a woman's freedom. ■



EXERCISES THAT HELP WITH CHILDBIRTH

ASANAS:

Standing postures to free the diaphragm, expand the chest cavity, and stretch the back

Sitting postures to practice breathing and meditation. The mind comes to a lull, and the stretching of the whole body frees the breath

Lying-on-the-back postures to stretch the spine and become aware of the back in its entirety

Squatting postures to open the pelvic and to become conscious of the perineal

BREATHING:

Working on the exhalation. Awareness that correct breathing will greatly depend

on the way the air is exhaled, making the exhalation as long and as deep as possible, letting the air return by itself, constantly focusing on the air breathed out and into the body

Using the voice as an aid to correct inhaling and exhaling

FINDING ONE'S POSTURE

During birthing preparation, I always insist on the necessity for each woman to give heed to her body in order to find her own posture for delivering, whether that posture be kneeling, standing, sitting, squatting, or curling up on her side. For to live in Yoga is to live in the here and now.





Vidyalayam Corner

BACK TO SCHOOL

At the end of my summer vacation, I was excited and looked forward to being back at the Vidyalayam. When I'm at school, I always have a good time, because I'm with Mrs. Raji and Mr. Mahen, my teachers, and all my friends; and, at the same time, I'm learning.

We enjoy the extracurricular activities that have been provided for us, like music, oragami, arts and crafts, and Spanish. I love getting up early in the morning and getting ready for school—it took awhile to get used to it, though.

During school, I feel relaxed and open. I never feel bored because I'm always doing something. Even after school, I have homework, and that gives me something to do.

At the Vidyalayam, we are not afraid to make mistakes. Because we didn't come here knowing everything; we came here to learn.

I know that whatever school I might go to hereafter, the Vidyalayam will always be my favorite!

—Shakti Howeth (age 9)

Pollution!

Pollution. . .Pollution!

It stinks; oh yes, it does.
It fills our beautiful lakes, air, oceans,
and forests.

It comes from the crop sprays,
the aerosol cans, the refrigerators
and the pesticides
in the form of D. D. T. and C. F. C.,
which harm our atmosphere.

It comes from the cars, the appliances,
the machines and factories.

Harken to me, my friends,
and try to prevent what is happening,

NOW! . . . or else!

—Nandalal Rasiah (age 11)

In beauty I walk.

With beauty before me, I walk..

With beauty behind me, I walk.

With beauty below me, I walk.

With beauty above me, I walk.

With beauty all around me, I walk.

It is finished in beauty,

It is finished in beauty,

It is finished in beauty.

—Navaho

VINEY AYAM

drawing by Kannan Rasiah



drawing by Asha Goodman

Moral: It is silly to say that you don't want something just because you cannot have it. —Asha Goodman

Day-by-Day with Sri Gurudev

Yogaville

Guru Poornima Weekend

7 - 9 July

In honor of our beloved Sri Gurudev and all of the great sages and saints whose lives and teachings embody Divine Love, we celebrated the holy festival of Guru Poornima during the weekend of 7 - 9 July.

The auspicious event was initiated on Friday evening with *akhanda japa* (continuous chanting). The program continued on Saturday morning with a Light Of Truth Universal Service, whose theme was "Divine Love," and a heartfelt tribute entitled "Divine Love," offered by Mataji Swami Gurucharanananda. In her homage, Mataji described Sri Gurudev as a "connoisseur of Divine Love," whose love and exemplary life guides, supports and transforms us.

Devotees presented many offerings to Sri Gurudev, including a beautiful, hand-made birthday card from the Yogaville community, two volumes of the LOTUS construction videotape from Shakticom, the Tamil version of the booklet, *Pathways to Peace*, translated by Dr. O. R. Krishnaswami, a booklet called *Discipleship: Key to Fulfillment*, composed by Amma Kidd, and another booklet entitled *108 Ways to Feel Better* by Meenakshi Honig.

Following the tributes and presentations, Sri Gurudev offered us a message of love, emphasizing that "If you love, there is only one way to love: unconditionally." Gurudev explained that to love unconditionally means to accept everyone as he or she is, to love all beings not because you see their actions, words and thoughts, but because you see their hearts. To see their hearts, said Gurudev, you have to have a pure heart.

After a festive luncheon, afternoon

activities included swimming at the Lotus Lake and chanting the *Guru Gita*. In the evening, devotees performed songs, dances and skits as offerings to their beloved Gurudev.

On Sunday morning, we gathered at Chidambaram Shrine for an *harathi* (waving of the light) to the *moorthi* (statue) of Sri Gurudev; then, all proceeded to the LOTUS to celebrate the Shrine's ninth anniversary. After circumambulation of the Shrine and the blessing of the altars, we met at Kailash for the fourth anniversary celebration of the Lord Nataraja Shrine, where a *puja* (worship service) to Lord Nataraja and *harathi* to the *moorthis* of Lords Siva, Ganesha, Krishna and Parashakti were performed.

During the afternoon, Integral Yoga teachers assembled for their annual meeting.

The 1995 Guru Poornima celebrations concluded joyfully and harmoniously in the evening with chants at Kailash.

New York City

25 August

On Friday, 25 August, Sri Gurudev attended a World Music Festival, "One World, One Music," at New York's Madison Square Garden, in tribute to the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations. The festival, which featured such luminaries as violinist Dr. L. Subramaniam, drummer Babatunde Olatunji, singers Patti Austin and Danny Rivera, guitarist Larry Coryell, and many other internationally renowned performers from all over the world, was sponsored by the Bhaaratya Vidya Bhavan.

Sri Gurudev was one of the special invitees to the Festival, along with Sri Chinmoy and Sri R. Venkataraman, Former President of India and Former Under Secre

tary-General of the United Nations. Some five thousand people attended the concert.

The following "Message" by Sri Gurudev was printed in the Festival's special souvenir book:

I am extremely happy to know that the "World Music Festival" is being organized by the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan on August 25, 1995, at Madison Square Garden's Paramount Theater in New York, to honor the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations.

I am delighted to see the long list of outstanding artists, representing different parts of the world, who are coming together to offer tributes musically to the UN. I would say that this is the real manifestation of Indian culture, which embraces the whole universe. The ancient Indian scriptures declare: *Yatra ishwam Bhavatyeka Needam* (Where the whole universe becomes a nest for the entire living beings); *Vasudhaiva Kutumakan* (The whole world is a family); *Yaadum Oore Yaavarum Kelir* (The whole world is my country and all creations are my kith and kin). This Festival of world music, with the theme of "One World, One Music," is a testimony to the all-embracing culture of India as projected by the above quotes. Mother India is and will be proud of such events, which are intended to create universal harmony, sister- and brotherhood.

The United Nations is a World Forum committed to resolving global problems—through cooperative action—and to creating better conditions and the social well-being of the world community. The World Music Festival is a wonderful concept to offer tribute to the UN, befitting its nature, ideal and character.

I send my greetings to the Bhavan for such a noble and lofty undertaking and wish the Festival grand success.

26 August

Sri Gurudev gave a public talk on Saturday evening, 26 August, at Saint Peter's Church in mid-town Manhattan. Preceding Gurudev's talk was a speech by Former President of India and Former Under Secretary-General of the United Nations, Sri R. Venkataraman. Sri Venkataraman's presentation was occasioned by the release of a book entitled *Hindu Dharma: The Universal Way of Life*, which was brought out by the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan. The book is an English translation of a six-volume series, *Voice Divine*, a collection of discourses given for over eighty years by the Mahaswami of Kanchi Kamakoti Peeta, who attained salvation in January 1994.

Sri Venkataraman described the Mahaswami as a *Jivan Mukhta*, a person who has realized the ultimate reality during one's lifetime. Of the Mahaswami, Sri Venkataraman also said: "By his austerity, erudition and spirituality, his discourses had gained universal acceptance, regardless of caste and creeds, faith and religions. On one occasion, a Muslim poet, after chanting his verses, said that he saw Allah in the presence of the Mahaswami. No less a person than the Consul-General of the United States in Madras, Dr. Albert Franklin, after speaking to the Mahaswami, said that he heard the voice of Jesus Christ."

Sri Venkataraman praised *Hindu Dharma* as a "treasure house of information, knowledge and wisdom," to be read "by all people irrespective of their faith and religion."

Following Sri Venkataraman's heartfelt speech and the release of *Hindu Dharma*, Gurudev lovingly acknowledged the exemplary life and work of the Mahaswami. During the rest of the program, Gurudev spoke to the capacity crowd on the theme of "Awakening the Mind, Opening the Heart."

—Rev. Kumari de Satchy

21 October

In honor of the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations, Sri Gurudev attended "Visions for the XXI Century," a symposium

sium organized by the Temple of Understanding and The Council of Religious and Interfaith Organizations.

The symposium was organized to run simultaneously with other United Nations anniversary activities. Sri Gurudev joined religious and world leaders in offering prayers for peace, and keynote addresses were presented by Nobel Prize recipient, Dr. Oscar Arias, former president of Costa Rica, and Dr. Karan Singh, former Indian ambassador to the United States.

In the evening, several thousand people attended an Interfaith Prayer Service at the Cathedral of St. John the Divine. The service began as Sri Gurudev, representing Hinduism, and the other religious leaders, resplendent in their colorful vestments, entered the Cathedral in procession. Beautiful prayers from each of the religions and multi-cultural music and dance presentations combined to make this a unique, inspiring and joyous event. ■

—Rev. Prem Anjali



Sri Gurudev addresses the Symposium. From left to right: Sri Gurudev, Jonathan Spranoff, organizer of the Symposium, Dr. Oscar Arias, Mata Amritanandamayi.



At the Cathedral of St. John the Divine's Interfaith Service, honored religious leaders included, from left to right: Sri Chinmoy, an unidentified Sikh representative, Dr. Karan Singh, Sri Gurudev, Mrs. Rajinder Singh, and Sant Rajinder Singh.

In Memoriam

VISHNU JAYSON



We mourn the recent passing of our beloved brother, Vishnu Jayson.

Vishnu became involved with Sri Gurudev and Integral Yoga many years ago and began teaching as an Integral Yoga instructor in the early 1970s. Vishnu taught many classes, and also served in the Publications Department, where he was involved in design, editing and printing. Then, in 1975, Vishnu became president of the New York Integral Yoga Institute.

By 1980, there were two centers in New York City, one uptown and one downtown. Both centers were so busy that there were not enough instructors to teach all the classes, so it was decided that the uptown center would be closed and classes would be consolidated and taught at the newer center downtown. However, Vishnu stepped in, lovingly and generously volunteering to

oversee the uptown center, which has flourished ever since.

For the past fifteen years, through Vishnu's great energy and commitment and through the grace of Sri Gurudev, the uptown center has continued to expand. There are now thirty classes being taught, and the center is opened seven days a week.

Also in the '80s, Vishnu became an interfaith minister with Rabbi Joseph Gelberman, with whom he had a very close relationship. In that way, Vishnu shared ecumenical teachings, expressing all aspects of Yoga and ecumenism in his own life.

Through his untiring service and humility, Vishnu was a great inspiration to all of us. Generously, he opened his apartment in the city and his house in the country to sannyasins so that they could take retreats. Also, he often filled in as a substitute teacher. He was al-

ways very humble and open to everyone.

On his own, Vishnu began practicing Yoga counseling, utilizing the teachings that Sri Gurudev has given us and always showing great respect for Sir Gurudev and for the teachings. Although he didn't have a formal doctorate degree, many people came to him for and benefited from his counseling.

After a memorial service in New York,

Vishnu's ashes will be brought to Yogaville and placed in our Memorial Grove.

We send our love and condolences to Vishnu's beloved wife, Marilyn, and to his children. Along with his family, friends and students, we will miss Vishnu's physical presence, but we will always feel the warmth of his kindness and affection in our lives. OM Shanthi, Shanthi, Shanthi. ■



Like a flame that burns in silence, like a perfume that rises straight upward without wavering, my love goes to Thee; and like the child who does not reason and has no care, I trust myself to Thee that Thy Will may be done, that Thy Light may manifest, Thy Peace radiate, Thy Love cover the world. When Thou wilt I shall be in Thee, Thyself, and there shall be no more distinction; I await that blessed hour without impatience of any kind, letting myself flow irresistibly toward it as a peaceful stream flows toward the boundless ocean.

Thy Peace is in me, and in that Peace I see Thee alone present in everything, with the calm of Eternity.

—The Mother, Sri Aurobindo Ashram



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Saturday, June 29: University of Virginia
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Sunday, June 30: Satchidananda Ashram –
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Integral Yoga Teachers' Reunion

July 1 - 5

The first reunion of all Integral Yoga Teachers will take place at Satchidananda Ashram following Vision of Peace. All Integral Yoga trained teachers, whether or not they still teach, are invited. The program will include workshops, networking, meditation and Hatha Yoga sessions, training programs, and even a teachers' refresher course for those who want to start teaching Yoga again. Time will also be provided for socializing, relaxing, and enjoying recreational activities.

A detailed brochure will be mailed out during the winter of 1996.

For prior information, call the Ashram Reservation Center at

800-858-9642

*If you think of the gain,
then you don't suffer the pain.*

—Sri Gurudev

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*We recognize God only
when God comes as us.*

—Sri Gurudev

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*Purify your mind.
Destroy your egoism.*

—Master Sivananda

This world is God's house.

—Sri Gurudev

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—Sri Gurudev

*When God wants to help you,
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—Sri Gurudev

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*Do what is to be done
peacefully*

—Sri Gurudev



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God is here always.

—Sri Gurudev

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